



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Fire Management Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2015



U.S. Fish and Wildlife collateral duty fire staff (front to back) Alex Galt (private lands biologist) and Maria Fosado (wildlife refuge specialist) with interagency MNICS #9 fellow crewmembers David Steffen (NPS) and Jeromy Schmidt (MN DNR, with flag) on the Tepee Springs Fire near Riggins, Idaho on September 11, 2015. Credit: Alex Galt/USFWS

Report provided by the
Branch of Fire Management
National Wildlife Refuge System
Headquarters Office, located at the
National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC)
Boise, Idaho

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OVERVIEW

This report summarizes Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15) accomplishments in the Fire Management Program for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) across its eight Regions and Headquarters office in the areas of personnel, wildland fire management, fuels management, training, communications/outreach, planning, and all-hazard response.

A record wildfire season hit public lands across the West in 2015. At season's peak, from August 10 to September 10, the Service deployed more than 220 staff members nationally to support other agency incidents.

Fire on Service lands began in January with a fire at Hawaii's Oahu Forest National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), the first ever there. During the late winter and early spring, refuge fires spread across the Southwest and Southeast, and from California to Minnesota. In May, a smoldering hotspot from the 2014 Funny River Fire at Alaska's Kenai NWR reignited. Many Alaska refuges were hit by fire this year, burning 1.5 million acres.



DOI Secretary Jewell thanks Service fire managers. (from left) Art Canterbury (Blackwater NWR, Region 5) and Mark Kaib (Region 2) serve as interagency Safety Officers at the North Star fire in north-central Washington, Sept. 2015 Credit: Tami Heilemann/DOI



FWS National Fire Safety Award. Branch Chief John Segar presents Barton Rye (St. Marks NWR, Region 4) with 2015 award for keeping fire crews safer by using GPS technology. Credit: Josh O'Connor/USFWS

In early June, drought conditions led managers on inland Northwest refuges to pre-position resources, and refuges in northern California increased fire staffing above normal levels for several weeks. In July, Florida refuges faced many fires, and others fires occurred throughout the Southeast and Southwest.

By August, Montana refuges also fought several large fires and refuges in Puerto Rico where in high fire danger, with Cabo Rojo NWR alone sustaining 10 wildfires. Service firefighters saved headquarters buildings at two refuges – Marais des Cynes NWR in Kansas and Wichita Mountains NWR in Oklahoma. During the height of wildland fire

activity in the Pacific Northwest in August and September, ten national wildlife refuges in Oregon and Washington sustained only limited damage, thanks to proactive fuels management.

Even while their numbers are shrinking because of budget cuts, highly qualified Service firefighters continue to manage fuels and initial attack of wildfires on Service lands, protecting more individual units across the most widespread land base of any federal agency; and also add value to interagency Incident Management Teams protecting communities across the country.

HEADQUARTERS – Branch of Fire Management

General Overview

The Branch administered the Service's FY15 Fire Management Budget received from the DOI Office of Wildland Fire (OWF): \$27.9M for Preparedness, which includes \$724K for Facilities Construction and Maintenance; \$22.9M for Hazardous Fuels; \$14.9M for Suppression, which includes \$954K for Emergency Stabilization; and \$523K for Burned Area Rehabilitation. The Branch represented the Service to OWF, Interior Fire Executive Council (IFEC), National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG), National Multiple-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC), and other interagency governance groups. Branch staff worked continually throughout the fiscal year with the Service's National Fire Leadership Team (NFLT) and its working teams, which represent all Regions. The Branch Chief also continued to supervise the DOI Medical Standards Coordinator position.

To provide better data to the interagency risk assessment process, the Branch coordinated with fire staff in each Region to correct locations in the Service's asset database of more than 6,000 highly valued assets belonging the Refuge System. The Branch continues to work with developers to improve the efficiency and functionality of the Fire Management Information System (FMIS) and to Chair the Data Advisory Team to the NFLT.

Personnel: There were five vacancies created in the Branch through attrition in FY15. The Branch Chief, John Segar, retired at the end of the FY, while the Budget and Planning Program Lead and the Administrative Officer accepted positions in other agencies; these three vacancies were advertised and are expected to be filled in FY16, with the Budget position being converted to Budget Officer. The Information Technology (IT) Specialist and Hazardous Fuels Specialist also retired during FY15, with some duties assumed by existing staff.

The Fire Planner continues to be a shared position with the National Park Service. Deputy Branch Chief duties were redistributed with the addition of a second Deputy position; the Deputy Chief became the Deputy (Management) and the Operations and Safety Program Lead became the Deputy Chief (Operations). The Deputy (Management) position was then relocated to the Refuges HQ office in Falls Church, Virginia, and Robert Eaton was designated Acting Chief during FY16 until the vacant Branch Chief position in Boise is filled.

Wildland Fire Management: In FY15, several Service units across the nation experienced elevated fire danger conditions that resulted in severity resources being requested. Regionally managed short-term severity expenditures totaled \$271,289 out of \$2,400,000 available for FY15, and a total of \$350,725 in long-term severity funds were expended for the Service nationally, out of \$1,752,721 available, in requests approved for:

- Region 1 Hawaii (February);
- Region 1 Inland Northwest National Wildlife Refuge Complex (NWRC), Sheldon/Hart Mtn. NWRC, Mid-Columbia NWRC, and Malheur NWR (July, August, and September);
- Region 4 Caribbean Refuges (August and September);
- Region 8 San Diego NWRC (October).

HQ – Branch of Fire Management, continued...

The Service now maintains 48 fire vehicles within the Working Capital Fund program, with a current replacement value of \$10.4M for the equipment managed within the program. Two Service projects were funded through the DOI Facilities Construction and Maintenance Program at \$724K -- replacement of an Equipment Storage Facility at Rydell NWR (Region 3) and replacement of a bunkhouse at Valentine NWR (Region 6).

The Branch approved five Emergency Stabilization projects -- Saddle Lakes, Hanford Reach NM and Lau/Strike Kipapa, O'ahu Forest NWR (Region 1); Funny River, Kenai NWR (Region 7); Tract 17, Sacramento NWR and Fremont, San Luis NWR (Region 8) totaling \$1,077,953 and nine Burned Area Rehabilitation projects in Regions 1, 2, 4 and 8 totaling \$459,926.

Individual Branch staff members with various qualifications supported wildfire incidents during interagency assignments, including as ICT2, PIO1, PSC, LSC, DIVS, SITL, and RESL in the Great Basin and Northwest geographic areas, as well as California and Alaska. Branch staff also provided intelligence support to NMAC and dispatching support for the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC).

Fuels Management: The Service fuels management program provided significant time and expertise to OWF efforts such as: the DOI Resilient Landscapes program, where two of the three Service proposals were funded; finalizing the Office of Inspector General (OIG) concerns for Community Assistance; and participating in ongoing projects, such as National Fuels Prioritizations and Reporting System (NFPORS). The NFLT's task team for determining fuels funding allocation to the Regions was finalized and adopted by NFLT, with the team's results used in the FY16 fuels allocation. The Branch Fuels Management Specialist served as vice-chair for the NWCG Fuels Management Committee and responded to 53 data calls/ requests for information. The Branch Training Specialist served a two-month detail as the BLM Idaho State Office Fuels Program Lead (August-September).

Several staff from Regions 1, 3, 4, and 6 supported national fuels management workload related to NWCG Fire Use and Fuels Management Committees, NFPORS Users Group, OWF Risk-Based SME group, and support for the Fuel Allocation and Accountability System (FAAS), including Brett Fay, Russ Langford, Patricia Heglund, Jon Wallace, Josh O'Connor, and Neal Beetch, as well as Calvin Gale and Glenn Gibson (both retired during the FY).

Training: The Service Fire Management Employee Development Program kicked off FY15 by introducing a new web-based platform for advertising Service-specific training and employee development opportunities. The program was able to support the following activities:

- Attendance by two individuals at the 46th annual Northwest Leadership Seminar
- Online and in-person natural resource college course attendance for five individuals at Northern Arizona University and Idaho State University
- Attendance at the annual South Canyon fire staff ride by two conference group leaders
- Developmental detail for engine boss from Morris WMD to fires at Charles M. Russell NWR
- Participation of 20 FWS participants in a new incident leadership training course (L-481 Advanced Leadership for Command and General Staff).

HQ – Branch of Fire Management, continued...

Additionally, a group of 16 FWS personnel, along with 21 other individuals from the USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, State of Arizona, and subject matter experts attended the Dude Fire staff ride in Payson, AZ in April. This national staff ride was coupled with a site visit to the Yarnell Hill Fire where 19 Granite Mountain hotshots lost their lives suppressing a wildfire in 2013. The group reflected on lessons learned at both sites with productive discussions about risk management and safety while networking with colleagues.



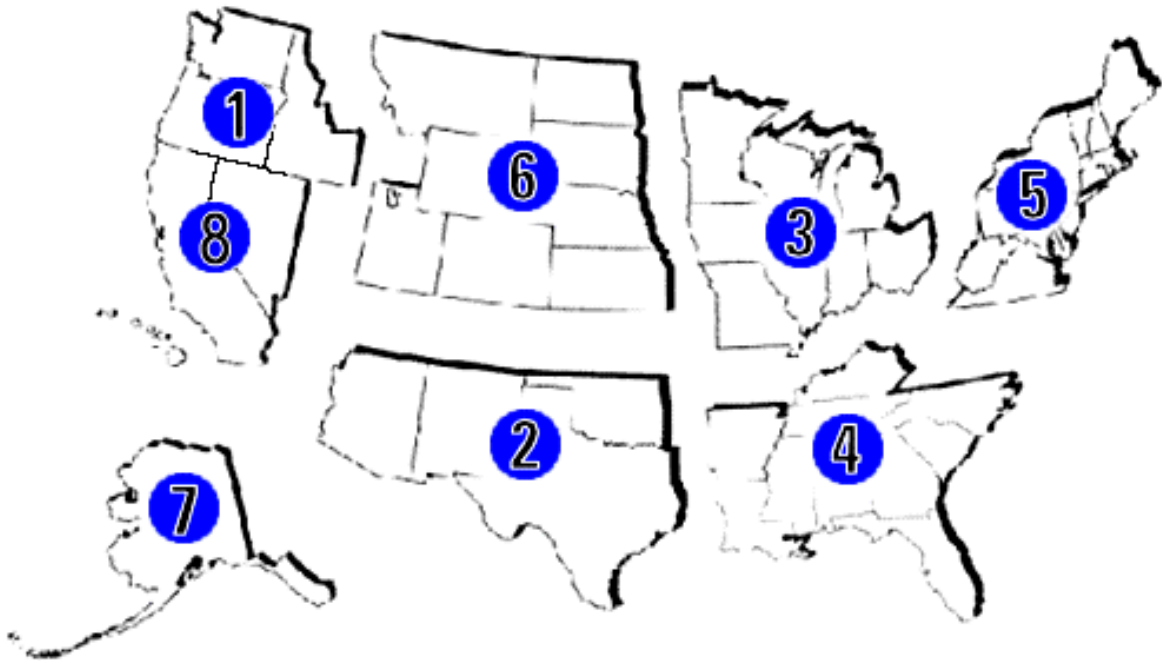
Communications/Outreach: The Branch Communication Coordinator worked with Regions and HQ to facilitate national media and social media coverage of Service fire program activities; and served as fire management program spokesperson for national media requests. The Branch compiled and circulated 35 regular “FWS Fire in the News” compilations of weblinks to leadership during the FY, including 250+ relevant news articles. The Branch communications program supported the Service’s expanded of Inciweb to provide public information for wildfires and prescribed fires; and provided ongoing coordination with NIFC, HQ and Regional public affairs specialists, as well as 55 Service Public Information Officers (PIOs) and PIO trainees.

Planning: The Branch Fire Planner worked with the Interagency Fire Planning Committee and OWF staff to develop new DOI policy for Fire Management Plans (FMPs); the FMP Framework was developed based on program complexity and issued as DOI Policy by OWF in December, 2014. The Branch developed a new corresponding FMP process within the Service’s Fire Management Handbook and provided education on SFMPs to Service leadership and staff.

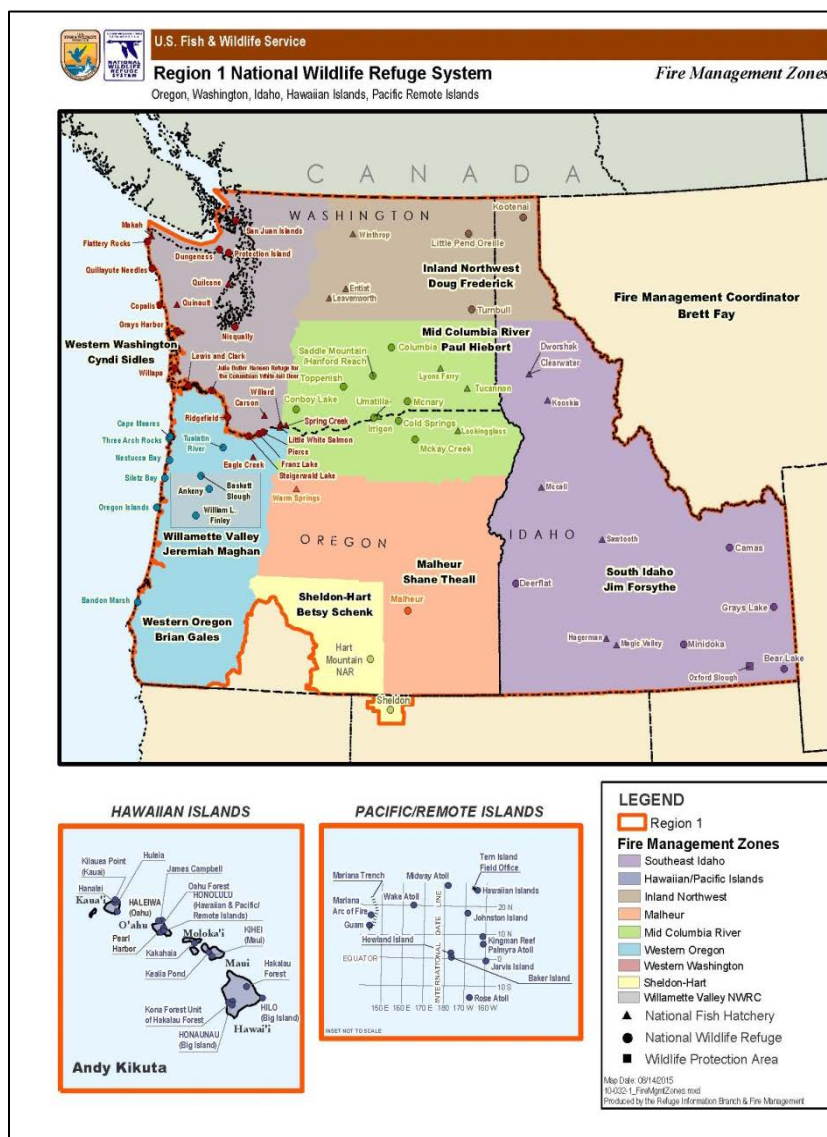
All-Hazard Response: The Branch's Wildland Fire & Emergency Management Advisor served in a long-term detail as the Service's Emergency Management Coordinator. Several Branch staff became qualified to serve on interagency Serious Accident Investigation Teams (SAITs).

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Regional Reports



REGION 1 – Pacific



General Overview

FY15 was a year of transition for the Region 1 Fire Program. The Region welcomed ten new permanent fire employees, including the Fire Coordinator and three Fire Management Officers. Many individuals stepped up to collectively partner with cooperators on Service and neighboring lands to manage fire on the landscape in the Pacific Northwest, Great Basin, and Pacific Islands. The focus towards partnerships was highlighted by preparedness efforts in southeast Oregon to increase response capacity to protect critical habitat for the greater sage-grouse. Relationships allowed the Region to continue to meet the mission of having a successful fire management program with continued dedication to firefighter and public safety, resilient landscapes, and employee development.

Wildland Fire Management: The Pacific Northwest experienced a more active fire season than previous years with more than 1.6 million acres burned in Washington and Oregon. Both the states of Idaho and Hawaii experienced above-average burning conditions this fire season with fires burning on Refuge lands in the Hawaiian Islands for nearly a month. This FY, 59 permanent and temporary Pacific Region firefighters were involved with the management of fires across the country. In the Region, we managed 33 wildfire starts on Service lands that burned 16,107 acres on eleven national wildlife refuges. Of particular note: the Saddle Lakes Fire burned just over 14,000 acres on Hanford Reach National Monument in Washington State; the Kipapa-Lau Strike fire burned 450 acres on Oahu Forest National Wildlife Refuge (a first), in Hawaii; and the Finley Fire burned nearly 135 acres on William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon State. Both of the fires that burned on Oahu Forest and W.L. Finley Refuges were unusual as they were the largest ever to have been reported on these refuges.

Region 1, Pacific, continued...

The Region was busy supporting its interagency partners, managing 12 fires and additionally responding to 76 support actions. The Region received approval for seven long-term fire severity requests and approved several short-term requests in eastern Oregon and Washington, all helping to keep Service fires at or below the Type 3 complexity level in these locations.

A significant amount of interagency focus was spent this spring building a strategy to best respond to wildfires in critical greater sage-grouse habitat. Additional engines, dozers, overhead and aircraft were staffed through partnerships to increase capability for initial attack to protect the greater-sage grouse and avoid its listing as a federal threatened or endangered species.



Fires burn across the Pacific Region: Saddle Lakes Fire, Hanford Reach National Monument (top); Kipapa Fire, Oahu Forest NWR (bottom left); Soda Fire south of Deer Flat NWR (bottom right) Credits: USFWS

Region 1, Pacific, continued...

Fuels Management: Targeted treatments were identified and prioritized as mutually beneficial for hazardous fuel reduction and habitat restoration. In total, 37 treatments were completed on 14 Refuges –this included 22 prescribed burn treatments totaling 8,290 acres burned, as well as 15 mechanical treatments (chipping, mastication, mowing, and thinning), totaling 9,068 acres treated on refuges. An estimated 75 miles of fuel breaks built alongside highways within the Mid-Columbia River Complex helped prevent thousands of acres from burning onto refuge lands. Interagency partnerships were instrumental in implementing many of the prescribed fires on Service lands. Existing partnerships with The Nature Conservancy as well as local, state, and federal agencies supported the use of fire as a land management tool within the Region.

2015 Treatment Accomplishments – Region 1		
Total of Treatments	NFPORS Acreage	Habitat acreage
37	9,749	7,608



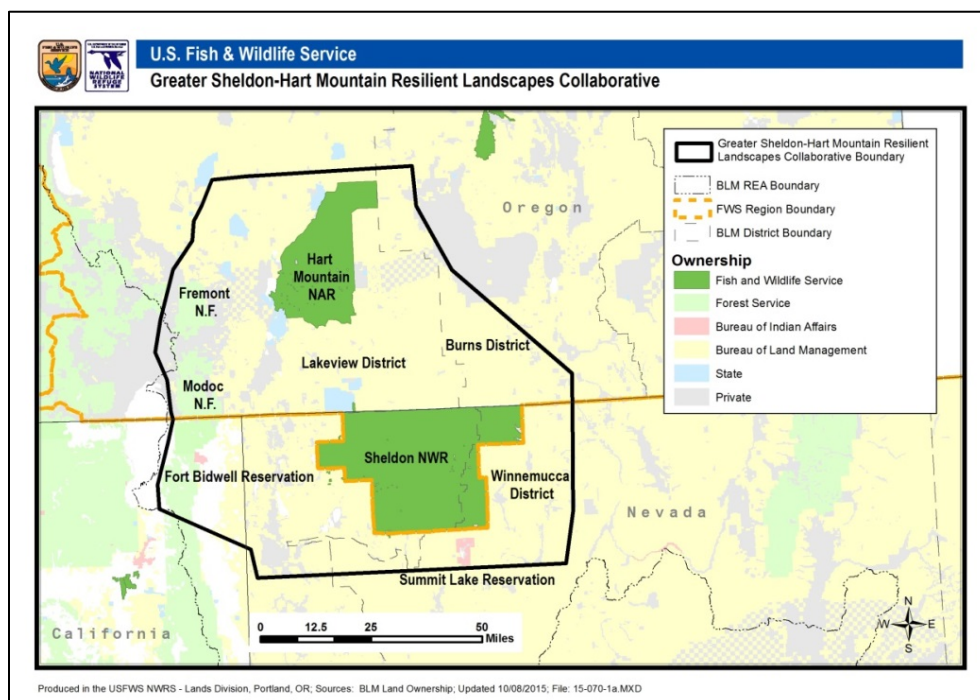
Fuels Treatments in the Pacific Region: Mechanical treatment at Turnbull NWR (top left); Prescribed burn at Willamette Valley NWRC (top right); Prescribed burn at Turnbull NWR (bottom). Credits: USFWS

Region 1, Pacific, continued...



Veterans Help Reduce Fire Risk: Student Conservation Association (SCA) Veterans Fire Corps members work with power and hand tools to manage fuels at Turnbull NWR. Credits: USFWS

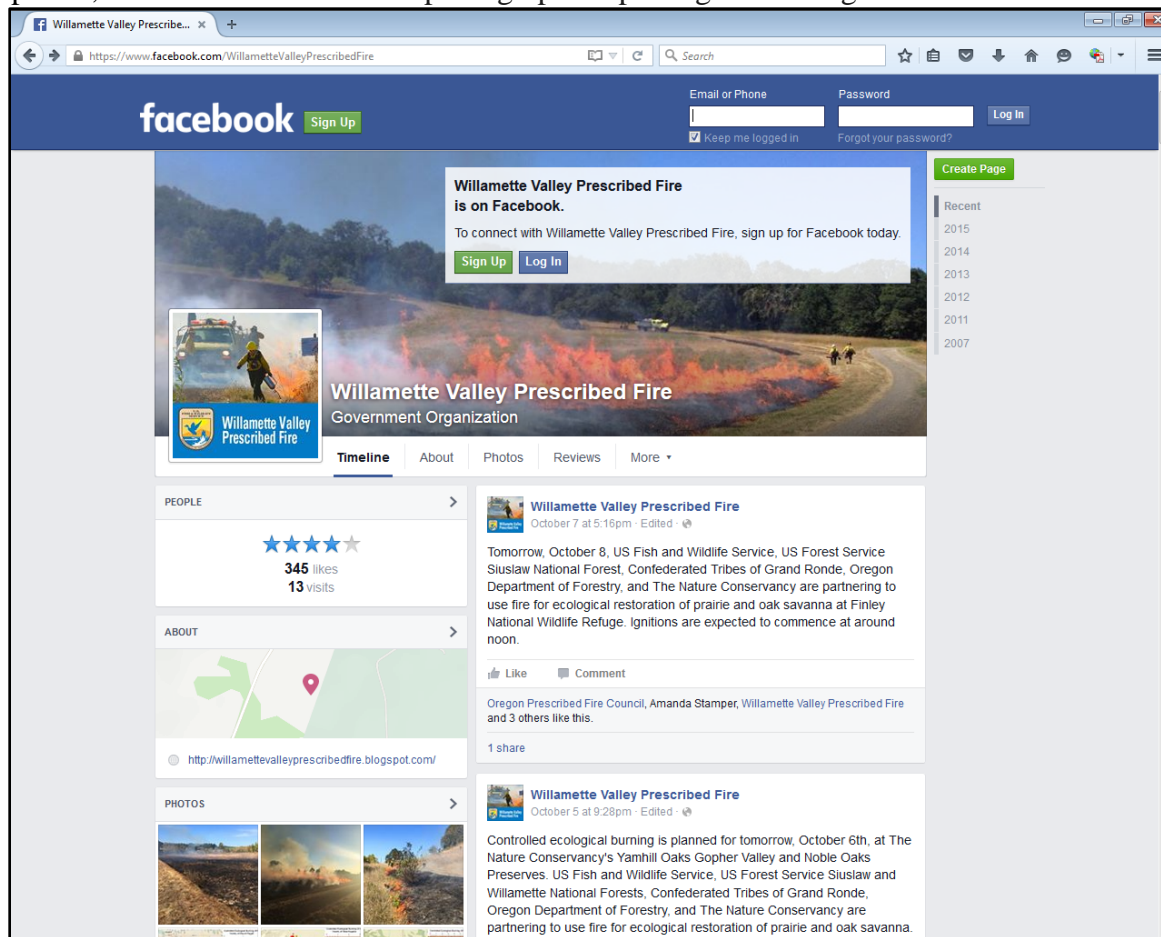
Resilient Landscapes and focus on the greater sage-grouse: The Pacific Region Fire Management Program received about \$4M in Resilient Landscapes funds in June to lead collaboratively with partners to increase resistance to invasive species and fire resilience in sagebrush ecosystems. Partners include Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Summit Lake Paiute Tribe, Great Basin LCC, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife, and others. These funds were contracted to cut and remove juniper woodlands that have expanded into sagebrush-steppe across a 4-million acre landscape.



Region 1, Pacific, continued...

Training: The Region emphasized personal and career development to highlight the importance of leadership concepts in wildland fire management. One individual attended the Prescribed Fire Training Center program, another completed the Asheville Interagency Hotshot Crew detail, and many others participated in various staff rides. The Region continues to actively participate in numerous interagency training opportunities by attending and instructing courses at the 100-500 levels. The Region was given the opportunity to host a Student Conservation Association (SCA) Veterans Fire Corps, which not only contributed significantly to hazardous fuels treatment accomplishments but also trained in basic wildland fire behaviors and suppression skills.

Communications/Outreach: Using social media to our advantage, Fire Management continues to post photographs and highlighted information onto its Facebook Webpages (<<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Pacific-Region-Fire-Management/258086100939186>>and<<https://www.facebook.com/WillametteValleyPrescribedFire>>), as well as post photographs onto the USFWS Pacific Region Flickr webpage (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwspace/>), where alongside photographs of endangered species, there are now about 150 photographs capturing fire management-related activities.



All-Hazard Response: Nothing to report.

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REGION 2 - Southwest

General Overview: Region 2 Regional fire management program has been working through some difficult financial times with strategic workforce planning underway and about 30 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions dropped. Three of our strongest District Fire Management Officers (FMOs) moved on to new jobs in FY15.

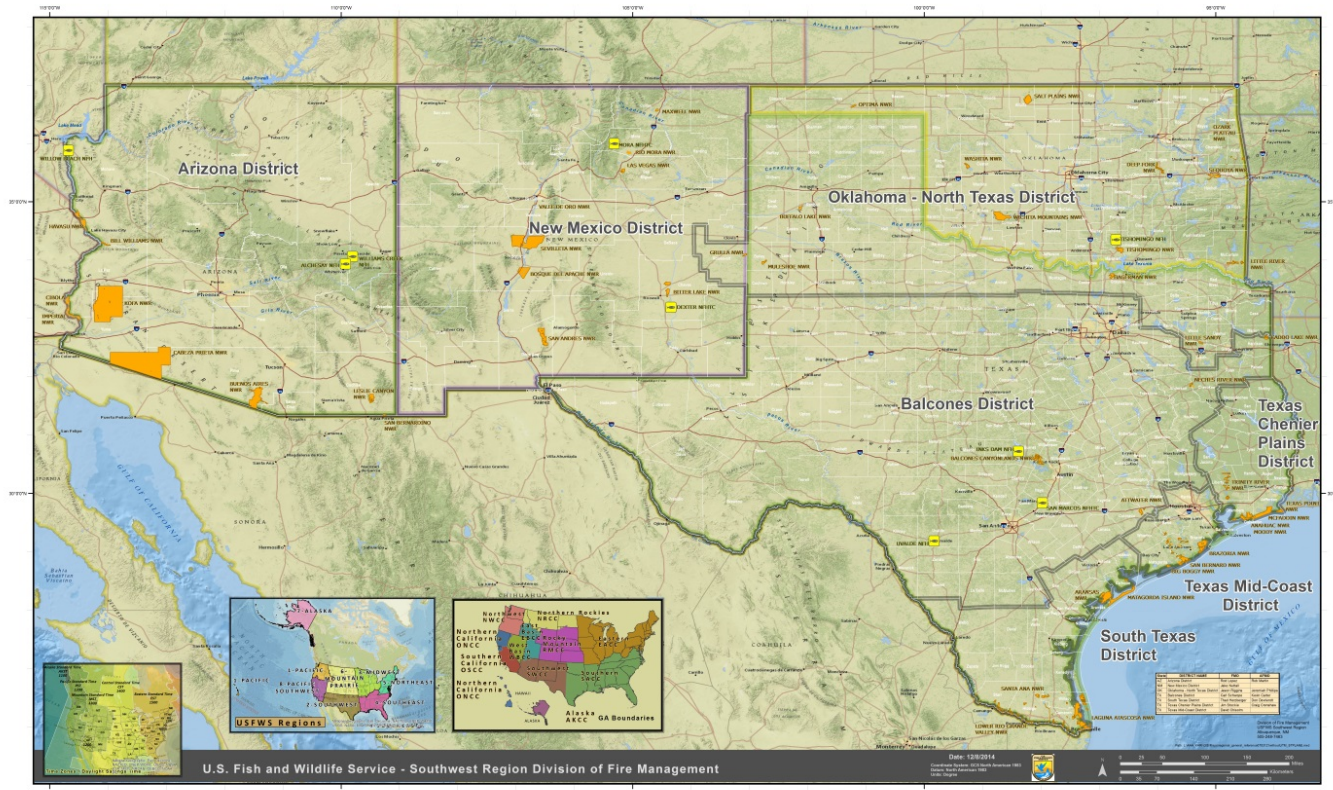
The Region had a mild wildfire season with 43 wildfires that burned 16,315 acres on FWS lands, and an initial attack success rate of more than 95%. No significant lost-time accidents were experienced by any fire personnel. The fuels target was met with approximately 48,000 acres accomplished of fuels and habitat improvement projects in FY15; the Region's fuel and habitat conservation needs for prescribed fire are about four times greater than projects funded or accomplished. The three primary budget program areas -- Preparedness, Fuels, and Burned Area Rehabilitation -- were obligated between 99% and 100% for FY15, with no over expenditures; administrative support provided by our budget staff exceeded our expectations again this year.

Despite many challenges, the Region was able to accomplish critical work and is better prepared to meet future strategic fire and habitat conservation needs. One example this year is our use of three Student Conservation Association (SCA) Veteran Fire Corps workers. These crews supported fuel and habitat treatment projects throughout the Region over the summer and fall, and they provided a more fluid workforce, allowing us to accomplish important conservation targets we would not have otherwise. Please see the Region 2 Refuges Fire Management website for more information; <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/fire/index.html>

Personnel: The Southwest Region's Division of Fire Management is led by Loren DeRosear, the Regional Fire Management Coordinator (RFMC), and Mark Kaib, the Deputy RFMC. Butch Wilson is our Prescribed Fire Coordinator. Kari Gromatsky is our Fire Geospatial Coordinator, Ralph Godfrey is our Fire Ecologist, and Chuck Maxwell is our Chief of Predictive Services at the Southwest Coordination Center. Mary Blake and Nancy Cunningham complete the regional fire team as our Fire Budget Lead and Administrative Assistant, respectively. Our remaining District FMO leadership in the field (after the departure of Jason Riggins, Thad Herzberger, and Jake Nuttall) include Jim Stockie at Chenier Plains NWRC, Carl Schwope at Balcones NWR, David Chisholm at Texas Mid-Coast NWRC, and Rod Lopez at Buenos Aires NWR..

Workforce planning has initiated regional reorganization into seven fire districts (see Map, next page), where the majority of the wildfire and prescribed fire workloads exist (*i.e.* Texas Chenier Plains, Texas Mid-Coast, South Texas, Balcones, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Arizona). Most of the Region's fire personnel are strategically located within these seven Fire Districts, and all refuges and national fish hatcheries fire management needs are accounted for under this organization. Through strategic planning combined with attrition, the Region has dropped from approximately 106 to 75 FTEs, at the end of FY15. The workforce has also been modified to include more temporary, seasonal, and student positions that enhances workforce mobility and flexibility. If our budget continues to decline, districts and personnel will need to be reduced even more. This would further degrade the Region's wildfire initial attack capabilities, and increase fire suppression costs and wildfire impacts to Refuge and public resources.

Region 2, Southwest, continued...



Map of Southwest Region Fire Districts

Wildland Fire Management: The Region had a mild wildfire season overall with El Niño conditions and above average precipitation. There were 43 wildfires that burned 16,315 acres on Service lands and an additional 11,548 acres on adjacent lands. Initial attack success rate exceeded 95%. At least two wildfires interacted with prior hazardous fuels treatments (see below), enabling more rapid suppression with fewer acres burned, fewer impacts to our resources at a lower cost. The majority of the Region’s District Fire personnel participated on Incident Management Teams, assisting with large wildfire response within the Region and nationally.

Crater Creek Wildfire - Rx fire interaction: The Crater Creek Fire started on September 14, 2015 on Fort Sill. The Wichita Mountains Refuge was contacted at 1400 by Fort Sill fire personnel requesting our assistance with the fire headed towards the refuge. A plan was developed to initiate burnouts by anchoring into the Quanah prescribed burn - fuel treatment unit which had been burned and mechanically treated in 2014 through March of 2015. The refuge visitor center was directly downwind of the fire. While there were numerous spot fires around the building, they were all suppressed at a small size. The potential for the fire growth was high, but the previous prescribed burns had created a buffer that was used to slow and contain the fire. The treatment areas had reduced fuels, made safer and more effective working conditions for firefighters, reduced potential for spot fires, and created improved and more resilient habitat for the refuge.

Region 2, Southwest, continued...

Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR) projects treated about 350 acres rehabilitated to native and less-flammable wildlife habitat on projects this year. Two new projects were planned, approved, and implemented starting in fall 2015. These projects are crucial for post-fire rehabilitation and restoration efforts, for Threatened & Endangered species habitats and recovery.

Doris A Wildfire-Rx fire interaction; On March 17th 2015, at approximately 1030 the campground host of Doris Campground called in a wildfire report for the campground. The fire had started during high winds from an attended campfire. The first engine arrived within 10 minutes and began assessing the situation. It was spring break week, Doris Campground was full and a significant number of visitors were hiking in the areas downwind from the fire. Numerous campers and tents were in the immediate area. Fortunately the fire was spreading towards the strategically located Quanah prescribed burn that had taken place 2 months prior. The Quanah Burn was more than 4,000 acres and prevented the wildfire from spreading towards the high public use areas. Public and firefighter safety were secured, within 20 minutes the fire was contained, and crews mopped up for the next 2 hours until it was safe to leave.

Fuels Management: Region 2 conducted 86 prescribed burns within the Region for approximately 43,000 acres. These burns included 70 Wildland Urban Interface treatments (about 38,700 acres) and 29 hazardous fuels reduction treatments (about 9,200 acres) for a total of 48,000 acres. About 29 of these prescribed burns were also conducted for strategic wildlife habitat enhancement, including burns at Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR, several for whooping crane habitat at Aransas NWR, and for mottled ducks at Chenier Plains NWR. One escaped prescribed burn occurred; it was reviewed by the Regional Office and lessons learned were documented to enhance future similar treatments.

Communications/Outreach: The New Mexico Fire District led a public prescribed burn at the annual Festival of the Cranes event. Several dozen visitors along with a class from the local Socorro school district attended. This educational prescribed burn is held annually and has become very popular as an outreach tool, and could be considered a model for other Refuges. The Region led Service outreach and education at the Association for Fire Ecology, International Fire Congress in San Antonio, Texas. Two of the 4 field trips were held at national wildlife refuges: Balcones Canyonlands and Aransas Matagorda. More than 60 participants learned about the role of fire on NWR lands for Endangered Whooping Crane, Prairie Chicken, and Blacked-Capped Vireo habitats. Additionally, the Service fire management displays were set up at a booth throughout the week; refuge and fire information was shared with more than 700 international participants who visited the booth.

Planning: The Region helped spearhead national development of the Asset Database by mapping and correcting the spatial location of more than 1,500 assets for fish hatcheries and refuges across the Region. The data were uploaded into the SAMMS database and will be used in future hazard risk analysis scenarios. The Region is also in final stages of developing a region-wide fire atlas tool for monitoring, science and planning; using satellite imagery and historical

Region 2, Southwest, continued...

fire records, the Division of Fire Management has completed fire atlases for more than 90% of the NWRs and NFHs in the Region to document the location and extent of fires, 10 acres or greater, occurring on or near refuge lands over the past 32 years. This data as a future standard operating procedure will be uploaded into FMIS and used in budget scenarios, planning, monitoring, science applications, and other agency and interagency analysis models. This was a standard put forward by Region 2 leadership that has been adopted nationally.



FWS, Refuges, Fire; Military, fire and refuge leaders gather around the Pittsburg Landing Stand at the spring Shiloh Leadership Staff Ride sponsored by Region 2. Credit: USFWS

Training: Region 2 funded and led a series of leadership training opportunities for all Regions including Refuge, fire, and non-fire programs for about 200 participants. These courses involved the Shiloh Mid-Level Leadership Staff Ride, and Gettysburg Leaders of Organizations Staff Ride. Another Gettysburg Staff Ride is planned in the spring of 2016 for all Regional Refuge leadership (Division Chiefs) teams with Washington Office participation. Region 2 intends to continue leading these opportunities, contingent on funding. The overall intent has been to more deliberately invest in our future leadership and to help better integrate the fire program with other programs in efforts to enhance mutual respect and conservation outcomes.



The entire class poses for photo after 4-5 inches of snow in front of Shiloh Cemetery at the spring Shiloh Leadership Staff Ride. Credit: USFWS

All-Hazard Response:

Nothing to report.

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REGION 3 - Midwest



***Ignition of Ottawa Prescribed Burn:** Big Oaks and Ottawa staff begin lighting along a wet line while volunteer Mike Broecker and TNC employee Ryan Gauger prep line. This collaborative project reduced heavy fuels loads adjacent to homes as well as restored habitat for the federally threatened eastern prairie fringed orchid.*

Credit: Brian Winters, USFWS

Regional Overview

Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15) brought several challenges: limited prescribed burning in Minnesota as conditions in the state rapidly escalated to regional planning Level 4 and extensive reorganization in the Midwestern Region as part of ongoing strategic workforce planning. Current FTE is at 35.25, a significant reduction of 16.25 FTE since workforce planning began in 2011. The fire organization maintained an active engagement with partners across the region to continue cooperative projects and worked with a wide array of stakeholders to complete critical urban-interface fuels reduction projects, conduct restoration and maintenance projects, and support public education and firefighter development through workshops, academies, and field days. Glen Stratton ended his tenure as the shared R5/R3 RFMC and is now solely responsible for R5 after assisting in the transition and hiring of a new RFMC for R3.

Personnel: We had some exciting changes in the region this year. Following several years of strategic workforce planning, the Region 3 fire organization is now organized under four Fire Management Zones. Personnel changes include: Jason Riggins is the RFMC for R3, Midwestern Region, Dan Laber is the North Zone FMO for Wisconsin & Michigan, Jamie Farmer is the South Zone FMO for Iowa & Missouri, Seth Grimm is now the West Zone FMO for Minnesota, and Thad Herzberger returned to R3 as the East Zone FMO for Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio.

Region 3, Midwest, continued...

Other staff changes include: Steve Nurse left a FWS/USFS Zone FMO position in the UP for a Deputy FMO position on the Huron – Manistee NF, Cliff Berger left the South Zone FMO position and transferred to the Carolina Sandhills NWR as Deputy Project Leader, Nate Perrine transferred from Detroit Lakes WMD to the Kenai NWR as their new Prescribed Fire Specialist, Blair Mace transferred from the Fergus Falls WMD into a Realty Specialist position at the Fergus Falls office, Blake Knisley transferred from the Iowa WMD into a Realty Specialist position at the Fergus Falls office, Mark Fondriest left Detroit Lakes WMD for an Assistant Engine Captain position on the Huron – Manistee NF, Mike Monahan left Necedah NWR for a position as Prescribed Fire Crew Leader with Adaptive Restoration LCC, a restoration company based in Mount Horeb, WI, and Lindy McNeilus transferred from Detroit Lakes WMD to Kenai NWR as their Prevention Technician.

Wildland Fire Management: Field stations were able to manage a dynamic fire season on FWS lands as well as provide incident support to local partners on wildfires. There were 43 wildfires for a total of 2,275 acres on Service lands in 2015. No long term severity funding was requested for FWS lands in R3 during the 2015 fire season. The region actively supported national incidents providing over 100 FWS personnel that responded to 9 states.

Personnel held positions in operations, aviation, plans, finance, dispatching, and command including several trainee assignments in CRWB, DIVS, ENGB, HEQB, OSC2, and SITL positions. Fire staff, collateral duty firefighters, and AD hires accumulated 41,855 hours on wildfires in 2015.

Fuels Management: Even with the suppression-oriented fire season, due to the advent of a particularly dry spring across much of the region and a reduced workforce, field stations were able to conduct 420 prescribed burns for 51,405 acres in FY15, an approximate reduction of 12,000 acres from the 10 year average. The Region was successful in utilizing a variety of grants and partnerships in order to meet Service objectives. Federal, state, county agencies and NGO's such as The Nature Conservancy teamed up with Service staff to assist in meeting this goal. At Necedah NWR, the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps gained hands-on training and development on multiple prescribed burns and assisted the refuge with public outreach and education. Other R3 collaborative fuels efforts include the restoration of the Moquah Barrens, a pine barrens area in the northwest sands region of Wisconsin. This ongoing project includes joint funding for seed collection and the future treatment of 250 acres of adjacent USFWS Iron River National Fish Hatchery land. A JFSP sponsored tour of the project was attended by R3 fire and refuge personnel this past August.

Training: The FWS coordinated an S-234 (S-219) class at the MNICS Academy and assisted with S-211, RX-301 and other courses. Interagency fire refreshers and other local courses were held at most FWS stations. The Region sent several personnel to staff rides at both the battles of Shiloh and Gettysburg.

Region 3, Midwest, continued...

Communications/Outreach: The Region continues to be engaged with active outreach and involvement in community projects through the Minnesota Incident Command System, the Big Rivers Forest Fire Compact, and local activities at Service field stations. In addition, R3 was well represented at the 2015 Midwest Fire Conference in Dubuque, Iowa providing several presenters; Eric Acker presented a session on "Burn Preparation and Fireline Placement" covering appropriate fire break types and their effectiveness in various fuels, Paul Charland led a discussion in the "Midwest Prescribed Fire Community Forum" about program information sharing responsibilities within and among prescribed fire practitioners, Jerry Szymaniak gave a presentation entitled "Low cost Geospatial Information System (GIS) Data Creation and Sharing Methods for Fire Management", and R3 Zone Biologist, Pauline Drobney, gave the conference plenary talk entitled "Seeing Savanna and Preserving Prairie; A Framework of Fire and Water".

Several fuels projects received media attention and provided an avenue to inform stakeholders of fire management activities and objectives.

- Partnership at Big Oaks NWR <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/InsideR3/June15Story8.htm>
- Burn next to Flying Cloud Airport <http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2015/04/23/prescribed-burn-to-help-eden-prairie-wildlife-refuge/>
- NCCC crews in WI <http://www.vintoniowa.org/articles/Et+cetera/article1014874.html>
- Grant help at Sherburne NWR <http://www.sctimes.com/story/sports/outdoors/2015/03/27/fire-part-habitat-restoration-sherburne-nwr/70509038/?from=global&sessionKey=&autologin=>
- Burning over ice in WI/FWS& DNR conduct largest RX burn on WI record http://www.wiscnews.com/bdc/news/local/collection_c00e1dd4-dcc3-55d0-a4ab-a67a374e39df.html#1
- Crab Orchard <http://www.wsilte.com/story/30320697/prescribed-burns-begin-at-crab-orchard-national-wildlife-refuge>

Planning: Region 3 completed the Fire Workforce and Fire Administrative Officer Efficiency Plans and is moving through the implementation phase. The first Spatial Fire Management Plan in R3 was started at Neal Smith NWR and is nearing completion. In addition, the Region provided SFMP design and delivery to R5 refuges in FY15.

All-Hazard Response: Nothing to report.

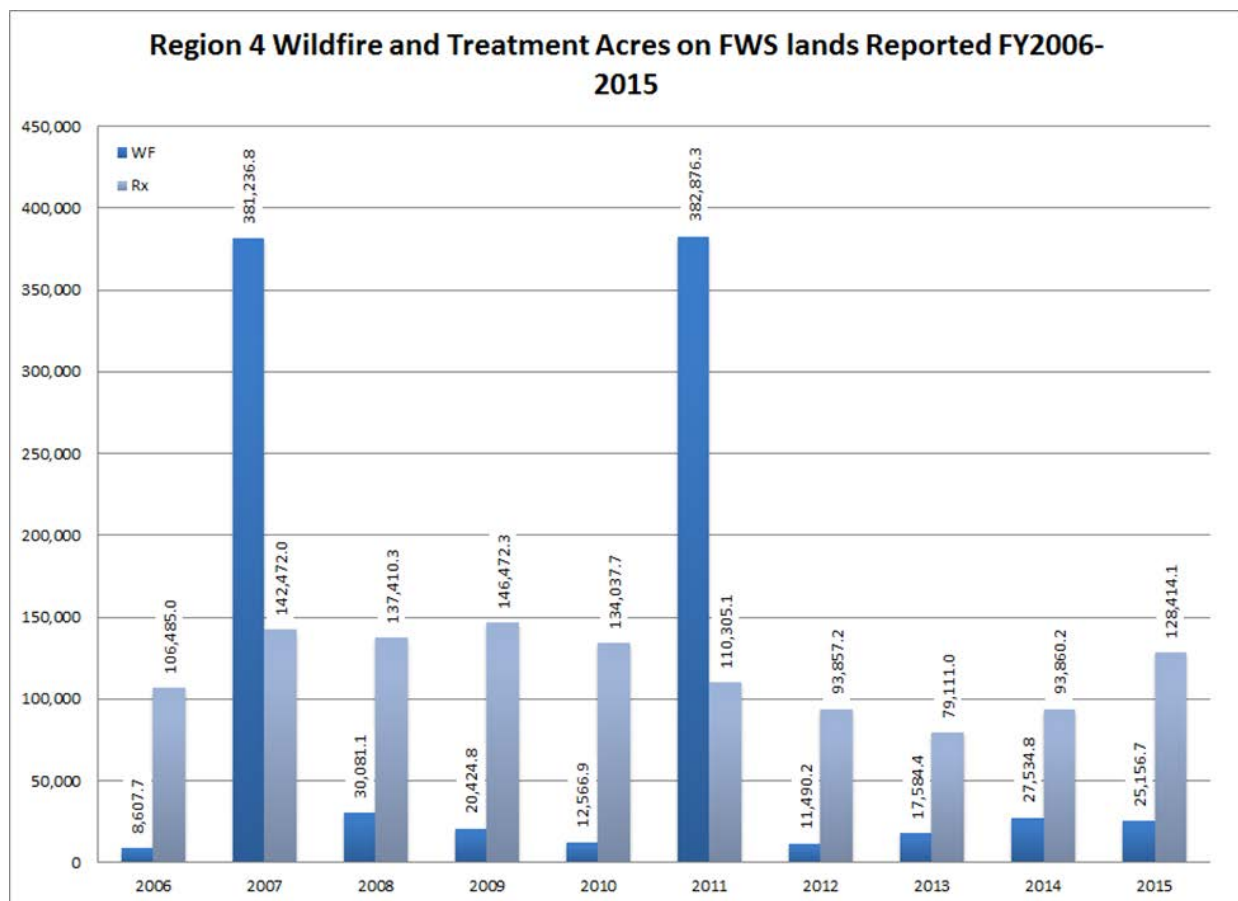
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REGION 4 – Southeast Region

Regional Overview:

With favorable prescribed burning weather conditions and a workforce focused on conservation delivery; the Southeast Region had a very safe and successful year. The FY15 budget was still well below the funding levels of 2009-10, but with the effects of workforce planning and slight uptick in funding from FY14, the field was provided working capital that they used judiciously to accomplish most of the priority treatments.

Strategic workforce planning continues as budget forecast are still declining, albeit a slower rate than a couple years ago. The Southeast Regions began FY15 with 97.5 FTEs and through attrition now has 89 FTEs. The workforce continues to be supplemented by temporary, seasonal and student conservation organization positions and efforts to leverage cooperative partnerships is strongly encouraged.



Region 4, Southeast, continued...

One of the year's highlight was the partial funding of the Longleaf Pine - South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative project with the Department's new Resilient Landscape funding. The project goal is to promote the maintenance and restoration of longleaf pine throughout the LCC. The funding will be used to fund aviation support and provide temporary help to stations with significant longleaf habitat. The project hopes to leverage funding, intelligence, and resources with the many initiatives and NGOs interested in promoting longleaf across the landscape; not just Federal lands.

Firefighters in the Southeast Region were awarded two prestigious awards this fiscal year. The South Georgia North Florida Fire Initiative was awarded the NIFC 2015 Pulaski Award. Okefenokee NWR is one of the founding partners in the Initiative. The Pulaski Award is for outstanding contributions to wildland firefighting from America's wildland firefighters; this is the second time this Award was presented to

Okefenokee NWR and its partners. St Marks NWR firefighter Bart Rye was awarded the Second Annual FWS National Fire Safety Award for his innovative use of GPS technology to track the location of firefighters on prescribed fires.



Prescribed Fire Merritt Island NWR: Firefighter Ryan Sharpe operates a Marshmaster while David Myers uses a driptorch
Credit: Michael Good/USFWS

Wildfire Management: The Southeast Region saw a decrease in wildfire numbers during Fiscal Year 2015. FWS Firefighters responded to 151 wildfires which burned 25,157 acres on FWS lands this year; compared to 238 fires burning 27,535 acres in FY14. All fires were managed in a safe manner with no lost time accidents reported. The Region's wildfire activity was centered in Florida this fiscal year. While many of these fires were actively suppressed, there were cases where local management plans allowed the fires to be managed for resource benefit. Five wildfires were managed for resource benefit for a total of 4,076 acres. Long term severity funding (30 days) was requested this year by District 7 and refuges in Puerto Rico. In addition to the regional workload, Southeast Region personnel (both fire and non-fire funded) supported suppression efforts away from their home units for 5,850 work shifts; from Alaska to Puerto Rico. There are 50 FWS employees that participate on the three interagency Incident Management Teams in the Southern Area. These teams were deployed in Alaska, Florida, Idaho, Mississippi, Montana, North Carolina, and Texas on nine different assignments in 2015. These teams create great opportunities for the development of our workforce while providing valuable oversight to units experiencing complex incidents.

Region 4, Southeast, continued...

Fuels Management: This fiscal year the funding levels were very similar to FY14 but the total acres managed through prescribed fire treatments were higher than last year due in part to favorable weather patterns and contributed funds. This fiscal year's target for acreage treated, as determined through the HFPAS process, was a success and the region accomplished 105% (52,178 acres) of the FY 2015 target. Additional funds through interior and exterior partnerships were used to help treat an additional 78,038 acres. All of the treatments were accomplished in a safe and efficient manner, reducing hazardous fuel loading and maintaining the health of our fire dependent landscapes. This year the SE Region treated approximately 81,211 acres of hazardous fuels in the wildland urban interface.

Training: This year approximately fifty-four position task books were completed by service fire personnel in the field and at the regional office. Of those, three were for Command and General Staff positions; Jennifer Hinckley PSC2, Bonnie Strawser PIO1, and Paul Reynolds OSC1. Also worth mentioning is the completion of six (6) Burn Boss task books; Grant Gifford, Anthony Dimaggio, Nathan Herron, Adam McCullough, Melvin Walston, and Roberto Trincado (RXB1). The interagency priority trainee dispatching process "Priority Trainee List" developed by the Southern Area Training Working Team and implemented at the Southern Area Coordination Center (SACC) was continued this year. Although the process is still being honed, the number of trainees placed on assignment coupled with the volume of completed task books suggests the process is shaping to be an efficient dispatching tool. Notable is our involvement in the Tennessee/Kentucky Wildland Fire Academy. This year was the 13th annual session. Mike Housh has served on the steering committee as the FWS representative since the academy

inception 13 years ago. This year FWS sponsored and delivered S-230, Crew Boss (Single Resource) and RX-410 Smoke Management and 24 FWS firefighters attended the academy as students this year. The fire program hosted and trained a SCA Veterans Fire Corp crew this year. In cooperation with Florida Forest Service, the veterans were provided initial firefighter training (S-130, S-190, L-180), S-212 Fire Chainsaws, S-131 Advanced Firefighter (at St Marks NWR, coordinated by Brian Pippin), S-133 Look Up, Look Down, Look Around (at Mississippi Sandhill Crane NWR, coordinated by Brad Bailey) and NSA03 ATV Operations (at Mississippi Sandhill Crane, coordinated by James Bates.)



SCA Veterans Fire Corp (left): SCA Veteran Fire Corp firefighters assisting on a prescribed fire at Okefenokee NWR. Credit: Reggie Forcine/USFWS

Region 4, Southeast, continued...

Also, Bert Rager functioned as final evaluator of all the Faller task books, after having the crew lead, Wesley Adams, evaluate them first. That was a good approach and nice work Bert. And good job Bunk Twiss on the IQCS side of things. They have some solid training and experience records now. The training modules at the National Interagency Prescribed Fire Training Center (PFTC) successfully completed 11 prescribed fires that treated 12,777 acres on four refuges in the Southeast Region. Attendance from the FWS included; two field coordinators (module leaders), six trainees working on Burn Boss or Firing Boss qualifications, and 7 Line Officers that attended the Prescribed Fire Workshop for Agency Administrators. PFTC continued to supply the interagency community with 24 burn bosses, 29 firing bosses, and 7 fire effects monitors returning to their home unit recommended for certification for their position. These skills were honed on 193 burns totaling 65,682 acres of which 15,766 acres were in the Wildland/Urban Interface zone. These burns were conducted in 6 states on 47 different cooperators' lands including state, private, and non-government organization land. This year the modules attending PFTC surpassed one million acres treated with prescribed fire since the Center was established in 1998. The burn that pushed us past the benchmark was conducted at A.R.M. Loxahatchee NWR.

Planning: The Southeast Region of the US Fish & Wildlife Service has 71 field units requiring Fire Management Plans (FMP). These are maintained in a database at the regional office. Field units are responsible for performing annual FMP reviews and providing updates as necessary. A database for statewide master fire agreements with the 10 southeastern states and Puerto Rico is maintained annually. The Agreement with Tennessee was renewed this year.

Last year the R4 Fire Management Program implemented a system of certifying Annual Preparedness Reviews at stations receiving preparedness funding. So far, 15 of the 20 stations receiving preparedness funds have participated, which translates to a 75% compliance rate.

Two of the primary DOI WUI mitigation programs, The Rural Fire Assistance Program (RFA) and the Ready Reserve Program, received no funding for FY2015. Although no funding was allocated, administrative work was still completed within both programs. Namely, ensuring funds obligated in the past were appropriately being utilized and facilitating the proper closing of grant agreements. This year, after program duration of nearly a decade and a half, all of the RFA grants were closed out. It was a good program. A lot of valuable partnerships were fostered with that program.

Field units continue to work with cooperators, predominantly the state fire protection/forestry agencies, in development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans. These plans continue to be developed on a wide array of spatial levels which include single small communities up to county-wide.

All-Hazard Response: The Region was fortunate to make it through another hurricane season without any major storms making landfall. Multiple tropical systems threatened or impacted Service interest but damage type did not require an emergency response.

###

REGION 5 - Northeast Region

General Overview: A long, snowy winter in New England limited the ability to implement prescribed burns in the New England zone before spring green-up. Normal winter/spring conditions in the southern part of the region allowed for successful prescribed fire accomplishments in the Mid-Atlantic Zone and VA/WV Zone. Wildfire seasons throughout the region were typical in nature. Southern pine beetle control was provided at Long Island NWRC, a prescribed fire module was sent to South Carolina to assist the U.S. Air Force, and prescribed fire partner assistance was provided to Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for the first time.

Personnel: The NY/NJ/PA fire management zone was consolidated with the MD/DE zone to create the Mid-Atlantic fire management zone. An interagency FMO was hired at Acadia NP to manage FWS and NPS fire programs in New England. The management of Regions 5 and 3 under one RFMC came to an end; each region will have its own RFMC in FY16. At the end of FY15, Region 5 had 18 fire program employees, approximately 105 collateral duty redcarded employees, and sponsored 20 emergency hires (ADs).



Blackwater Marsh RxB 2015: Fuels treatment in marsh habitat at Blackwater NWR, MD Credit: USFWS

Region 5, Northeast, continued...

Wildland Fire Management: Region 5 had four wildfires for a total of 170.5 acres - two wildfires occurred at Back Bay NWR, VA for a total of 20 acres; one wildfire at Canaan Valley NWR, WV for 150 acres; and one wildfire at Cape May NWR, NJ for 0.5 acres. Short-term severity was used several times for aerial wildfire detection at Great Dismal Swamp NWR. Forty red-carded employees, 14 emergency hires (ADs), and 9 AmeriCorps firefighters were deployed on wildfire incidents outside of Region 5.



Spring grassland burn at Rappahannock NWR, VA 2015, Credit: USFWS

Fuels Management: Overall, Region 5 had a safe and successful fuels management program. Strong prescribed fire partnerships with several state agencies, The Nature Conservancy, and AmeriCorps NCCC played an important role in meeting fuels and habitat goals both on and off refuge lands. A total of 12,223 acres were treated using prescribed fire (12,034 acres) and mechanical treatments (189 acres). The assigned fuels management target for Region 5 was 9,203 acres. Ten treatments occurred in the WUI accounting for 12,075 acres and three treatments were in the non-WUI for 148 acres. Region 5 had no escape prescribed fires during 25 burn days.

Training: Fire staff participated as instructors, facilitators, or course organizers for the following interagency sponsored courses: S-130, S-190, L-180, ICS-100, S-212, S-215, S-336, S-300, RT-130, RT-212, and Advanced Water Handling Techniques.

Region 5, Northeast, continued...



FireTraining: AmeriCorps basic firefighter training, Wakefield, VA 2015, Credit: USFWS

Communications/Outreach: A success story about a prescribed burn at NCTC was posted on the Northeast Cohesive Strategy website

<http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?ca=fc0adfcc-bcf4-48f2-8105-82781c7ef52d&c=438acf50-54d3-11e3-9880-d4ae5292c36f&ch=44022230-54d3-11e3-9914-d4ae5292c36f> Three success stories were posted on FWS Field Notes web site:

AmeriCorps Fire Training:

<http://www.fws.gov/FieldNotes/regmap.cfm?arskey=35967&callingKey=region&callingValue=5> The Women of Blackwater Fire

<http://www.fws.gov/FieldNotes/regmap.cfm?arskey=35991&callingKey=region&callingValue=5> Fire Staff Building Strong Partnerships

<http://www.fws.gov/FieldNotes/regmap.cfm?region=5&resultSet=All>

Planning: Regional planning efforts included collection of employee data necessary to enter Phase 2 of the DOI Medical Standards Program, and increasing agency administrator training for refuge projects leaders. MOUs were finalized with VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and PA Department Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

All-Hazard: Fire staff members were not deployed to any all-hazard events.

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REGION 6 – Mountain-Prairie Region



Regional Overview: FY15 ushered in many changes this year as Mike Haydon settled into his new role as Regional Fire Coordinator on December 11, 2014. The Fire Program had a safe and productive year, staying busy not only at home, but in new efforts like establishing mitigation procedures and operating plans to address Secretarial Order 3336 regarding protection of greater sage-grouse habitat, providing greater focus on pollinators and monarch habitat, and working with the Air Force to develop a Service First agreement for the management of fire risk at designated Air Force lands. The Region ended the summer supporting suppression efforts in California and the Pacific Northwest, resulting from the unprecedented drought.

Budgets overall remained flat in FY15 but still reflect a decline due to increasing cost of living adjustments, step increases, and higher operating costs. Significant focus was placed this year on Region 6 fleet management processes and vehicle numbers which resulted in a 30% reduction in light and medium duty vehicles, including fire vehicles. The Regional fleet reduction, along with Region 6 fire program placing five engines into the Working Capital Fund (WCF), presented many challenges as we downsize personnel and equipment. Anticipated future budget cuts still remain a concern as the Department continues to evaluate the agency allocation formula for preparedness dollars and fuels funding shifts to a risk-based allocation process. Regionally, workforce planning efforts continue to be emphasized as Refuges started the process in earnest this summer.

FY15 began with a very dry fall and winter throughout most of the Region with numerous burn bans in effect by early May in the Dakotas. However, these conditions quickly changed and most of the Region had a wetter and cooler than normal period from mid-May through early August. These conditions led to a low to normal season for wildland fire occurrence in the Region.

Region 6, Mountain-Prairie, continued...

Personnel: The Region filled its first Service-First position with the US Air Force wildland fire operations by hiring Shelly Crook as AFMO, working out of Patterson AFB. Shelly's position is the first to be filled by the Region and plans are currently underway begin additional staffing of operational modules at the Air Force Academy in CO and Ellsworth AFB in SD.



Deon Steinle (left), Assistant Fire Management Officer at Marais des Cygnes NWR in Kansas, accepts the National Park Service (NPS) "drip torch" trophy on behalf of the Mid Plains Zone from Jim McMahon, NPS. Credit: USFWS

Fire personnel within the Region also received distinguished awards. The Mid-Plains Zone Fire Management Staff based in Kansas received the National Park Service (NPS) Midwest Region Fire Management award for "Outstanding Fire Management Accomplishments" under a Service-First Agreement. This marks the first time that this NPS award has been given to an individual outside/entity outside the agency.

Nick Connelly (Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR) received Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest (ARF) Firefighter of the Year award. Through an agreement with ARF, Nick spent the summer as a crewmember on the new ARF helicopter, fighting wildfires as well as performing Search and Rescues duties. Also, Brooke Malcom was promoted to Business Management Specialist/Coordinating Group manager at the Rocky Mountain Area Coordination Center (RMACC).

Personnel moves in the Region included: Blake Stewart relocated to Flint Hills Kansas; Jim Forsythe accepted the SE Idaho FWS FMO job; Michael Hill was selected as the AFMO at

Kenai AK, Erik Haberstick was hired as AFMO and Josh Haen as Engine Captain for the Rocky Basin Zone; John Ashcraft accepted a NPS position at Cumberland Gap National Historic Park in southeast Kentucky.

Planning: Fire Management Plans completed during Fiscal Year 2015 include: Lost Trail NWR and NW Montana WMD Flathead County FMP; Ouray NWR and Ouray NFH FMP; and Lee Metcalf NWR.

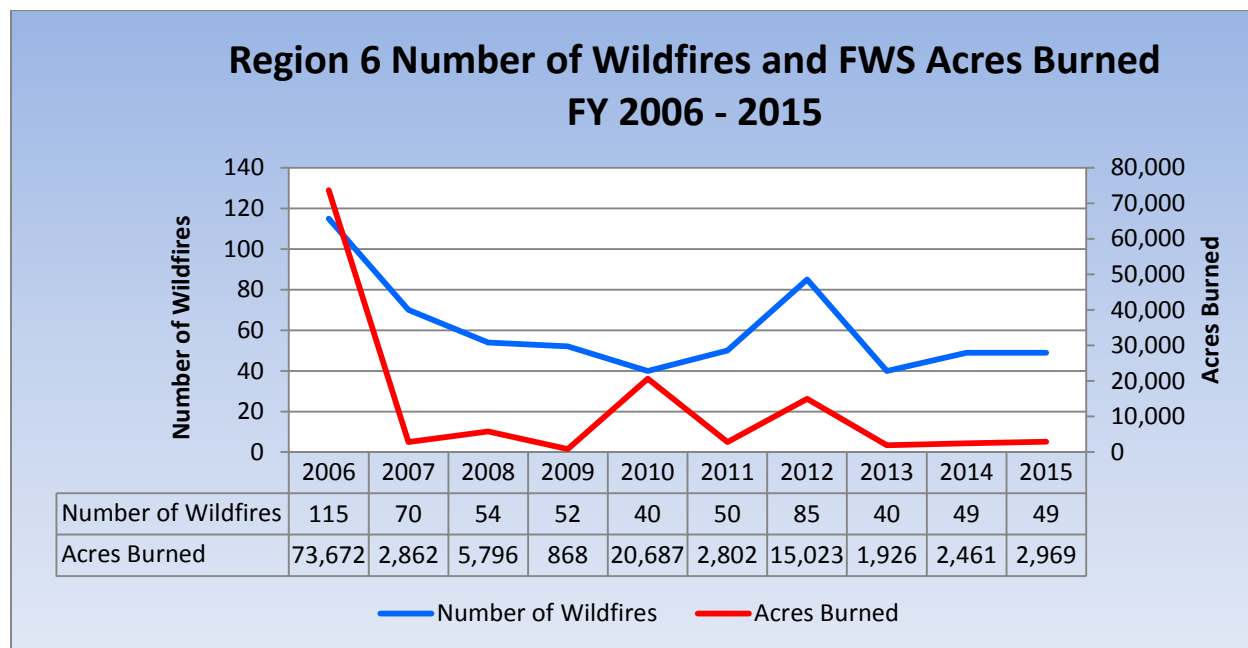
Resilient Landscape (RL) proposals to improve habitat for the Greater and Gunnison Sage-grouse and the Monarch butterfly were also completed. Two Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposals in the Region were funded – Southwest Colorado Resilient Landscape Proposal which focused on the T&E listed Gunnison Sage-grouse and Southern Utah which focused on greater Sage-grouse. Region 6 supported both of these proposals as well as other proposals that were not selected for funding in FY15.

Region 6, Mountain-Prairie, continued...

Wildfire Management: The Region experienced its first documented wildfire on a Coordination Area when the Sheep Creek Fire burned part of the Tongue River Deer Refuge and Winter Pasture Coordination Area located near Sheridan, WY. Coordination Areas are lands owned by FWS but managed for wildlife habitat through an agreement – generally with State Wildlife Agency. The Sheep Creek fire started on August 2 and quickly grew to a Type 3 incident. The fire was contained August 11 after burning 1,298 acres (source WFDSS shapefile) of which 368 acres is FWS land. As fee-title land owner, FWS was responsible for a portion of the suppression costs. In FY 2015, Region 6 had a slightly below average wildfire occurrence year. 49 wildfires occurred on FWS lands compared to 10-year average of 60 wildfires per year. If the highest wildfire occurrence year (2006 with 115 wildfires) and lowest occurrence year (2010 with 40 wildfires) are excluded, the Region averages 56 wildfires/year.



Wildfires burned a total of 2,969 acres on Service lands in the Region, which is considerably below the 10-year average of 12,900 acres. However, the current 10-year average is being heavily influenced by high 2006 data; if 2006 (high - 73,672 acres) and 2009 (low - 868 acres) are excluded from analysis, the average wildfire acres burned for the Region is 6,816 acres.



Wildfire data above includes wildfires that were suppressed on FWS lands and also Natural Outs.

The North Dakota Zone had the most wildfires (20); most acres burned (1,794); and the largest wildfire in FY 15. The single largest acreage wildfire (Houghton Juhl wildfire) burned a total of 471 acres of FWS land within the Devils Lake Wetland Management District.

FY 2015 Wildland Fire Totals by Zone (data as of 10/14/15)

Fire Management Zone	Number of Treatments on FWS	FWS Acres Treated	Total Treatments All Lands⁽¹⁾	Total Acres Treated All Lands⁽¹⁾	Number of Wildfires⁽²⁾	FWS Acres Burned by Wildfire
Great Plains	33	9,140.0	33	9,140.0	5	35.8
Mid-Plains	57	11,595.9	60	14,534.0	14	249.6
Montana	10	3,922.3	11	3,924.3	7	519.0
North Dakota	32	11,118.9	33	11,119.0	20	1,794.2
Rocky Basin	5	1,563.7	5	1,563.7	3	370.1
Total	137	37,340.8	142	40,281.0	49	2,968.7

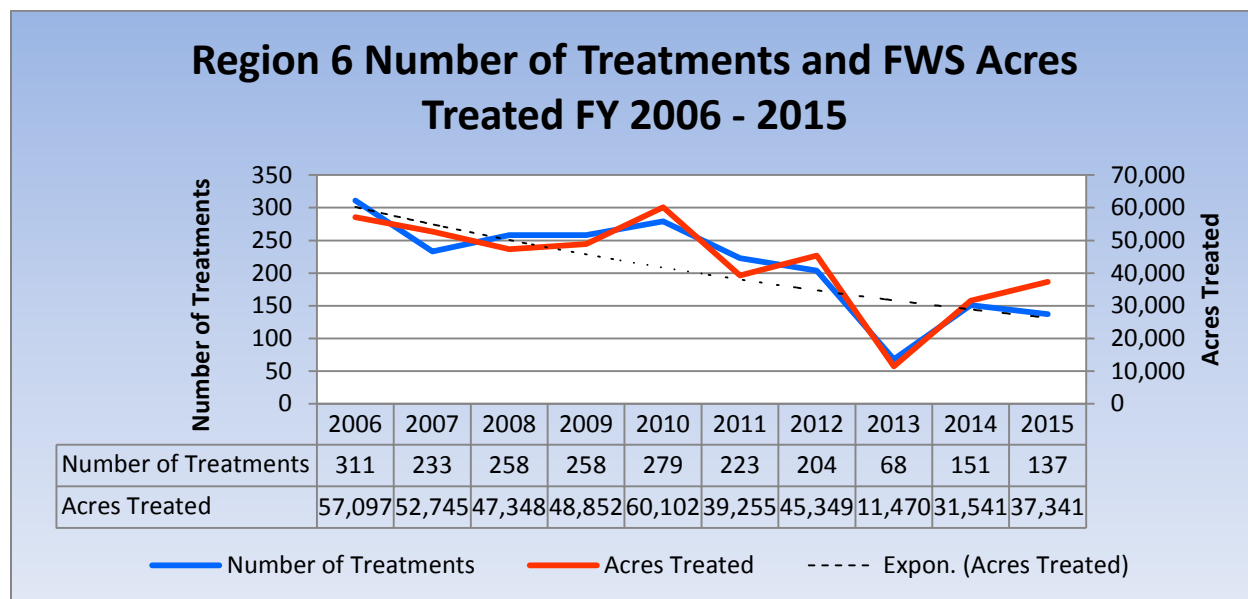
⁽¹⁾ Includes all land ownership and total acres treated.

⁽²⁾ Wildfire data includes wildfires that were suppressed on FWS lands and also Natural Outs.

The Mid Plains Interagency Handcrew completed its 13th year of existence in 2015. FWS sponsors the crew and traditional partners include the Nebraska NF, Black Hills NF, National Park Service, Kanas Forest Service, Denver Fire and the BIA-Horton Agency. The benefits of this partnership include increasing experience and qualifications of FWS firefighters, as well as cooperation between all agencies, departments and organizations that work together on the crew.

Fuels Management: Due to a dry fall, winter, and early spring especially in Dakotas, some of the Zones had difficulty accomplishing planned fuels treatments. However, weather patterns finally changed and Zones were able to conduct a number of treatments and meet regional fuel reduction targets. A total of 137 fuels treatments were completed on FWS lands in FY 2015 with the largest treatment being the 7,110 acre Wilderness burn on Lostwood NWR. Of the 137 total treatments, 133 were prescribed fires (36,765) acres and 4 were mechanical treatment (576 acres). The number of treatments/acres completed in 2015 is the third lowest number in last 10 years and not only reflects the weather, but also the reduction in fire personnel and funding that has occurred in the Region. Historically, the 10-year average for the Region is 212 treatments per year treating 43,109 acres of FWS lands. The Mid Plains Zone also entered into a Service First Agreement with the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest in northeast Colorado. Under this agreement the FWS provides a seasonal helicopter crewmember for the module and in return the Arapaho-Roosevelt provides personnel and equipment to assist with fuel treatment work at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge Complex. The Montana Zone used Student Conservation Association (SCA) Veterans Corps crew for fuels management at multiple sites.

A prescribed fire escaped containment on November 1, 2014 after two days of mop-up when red flag conditions rekindled a hot spot along the control line on the Owens Bay WMD. The escaped fire was contained to FWS lands and burned a total of 32 acres. No accidents, damages or injuries occurred during this incident.



Treatment data above is only for treatments that occurred on FWS lands.

Training: In 2015 the Great Plains Zone hosted its first prescribed fire Training Exchange (TREX) which received 75 applications (10 international), involved 26 detailers, 21 Overhead positions and 12 other support positions. However, severe to moderate drought in many areas resulted in cancellation of the training due to state-wide burn bans and state declared disasters.

Fire staff from Region 6 once again participated in quality leadership training by sending trainees to the Gettysburg, and Shiloh staff rides. Other training obtained included: PFTC, RT-372, S-390, S-341, S-271, S-200, M-581 and annual firefighter refresher. During 2015 the Region had 37 individual taskbooks completed which included the following positions ICT2, ICT3, OPS1, DIVS, HECM, EQPM, TFLD, FEMO, IADP, ENGB, FAL1, ENOP, FAL2, FAL3, GSUL, EQPM, and FFT1. In 2015, Region 6 continued to host several local NWCG courses, participated in several federal, state, and local fire academies, and provided cadre for both lower and upper level NWCG courses around the country.

Communications/Outreach: Zone FMO's reached out this year to host: the Minnesota/Iowa Youth Conservation Corps to assist with prescribed burning in Kansas; an international fuel/fire management crew from Spain as part of the Great Plains Training Exchange; the Soldier Creek Job Corps to assist with prescribed burning, and; the Veterans Green Corps who participated in thinning 22 acres at the National Bison Range Wildlife Refuge.

All-Hazard Response: Regional fire staff provided technical assistance regarding burning of lands affected by an oil spill - this occurred on the Norman Lake Waterfowl Protection Area in the Crosby Wetland Management District. The spill resulted in approximately 40 barrels of oil and 400 barrels of brine being spilled; mobilization of an emergency response team; and the need for a prescribed burn plan (prepared by the contractor) and reviewed by Regional office staff.

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REGION 7 – Alaska Region

General Overview: Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15) was challenging, yet successful in many ways. Predictions of further budget declines led to continued, seemingly never-ending discussion about workforce planning, but staff departures enabled creative shifting and sharing of positions. The 2015 fire season resulted in the second highest acreage burned for Alaska and for R7 Refuges. In mid-June, 295 fire starts were reported in 7 days, a consequence of over 61,000 detected lightning strikes during the period. As of mid-September, 5.1M acres had burned statewide in 766 fires. Of this, 74 fires burned over 1.5M acres on refuges. An unusual aspect of this season was numerous fires burning across the state, from Canada to the western coast, at the same time. The fifth year of interagency cooperation under our statewide master agreement increased cohesiveness of agencies for effective fire management and a very active Coordinating Group.

Personnel: There were several personnel changes within the Alaska Region Fire Program in FY15. Region 7 FWS and the BLM Alaska Fire Service (AFS) co-funded a Fire Planning Specialist position duty-stationed on Fort Wainwright at AFS headquarters. The position fills a need for both agencies and provides a valuable link between FWS and AFS, who is responsible for providing fire protection on Service lands. This position was filled by the Eastern Interior Refuges FMO, leaving a vacancy in the Fairbanks office that is in the process of being filled. The fire management office in Soldotna, responsible for Kenai and Kodiak NWRs, experienced a 100% turnover in staff over the last year. The AFMO retired in April 2014 and the FMO retired in December. This presented an opportunity for rezoning and shifting of personnel after FWS closed operations in McGrath. The FMO in McGrath had been responsible for Innoko, Togiak and Yukon Delta NWRs. Management of Innoko NWR moved to Galena, and the Northwest Alaska Refuges FMO assumed fire management duties for the Refuge. The FMO in McGrath moved to Soldotna, leading the newly created Southern Area Refuges consisting of Kenai, Kodiak, Yukon Delta, and Togiak Refuges. The Prescribed Fire and Operations Technician and the Prevention and Mitigation Specialist, both based in Soldotna, resigned. By fall 2015, these and the AFMO positions were filled, leaving the office fully staffed for the first time in more than a year.

Wildland Fire Management: The 2015 fire season was off to an early start with the first fire staffed on May 16, but fire activity slowed by late July. A total of 98 incidents on 13 Alaskan Refuges burned 1,508,589 acres. This is the second largest acreage recorded, following close behind 2005 when 1,770,103 acres burned. Ten of this year's fires were human caused and 88 were ignited by lightning; there were 2 false alarms. The largest number of fires, 24, occurred on the Yukon Delta NWR, burning over 269,683 acres of Refuge land. This is unusual as most of the Refuge is comprised of tundra that burns far less frequently than boreal forest areas. Nowitna NWR had the second highest number of fires at 18, and the largest area burned for a single refuge at 431,434 acres. Distribution among the Alaska Fire Management Options was as follows: 4 in Critical, 17 in Full, 6 in Modified, and 71 in Limited. Fires in the Limited Management Option are in areas where no resources were threatened unless "point-protection" was needed, and they were monitored from the air in accordance with policy. Numerous incident management teams (IMT) from Alaska and the Lower 48 and detailers assisted in managing fires that were partly or entirely on Alaska Refuges. The Northwest Alaska Refuges zone, which experienced a total of 44 fires that burned 989,000 Refuge acres, worked with a Wildland Fire Management Team, two Type 2 IMTs, two Type 3 IMTs, and two detailers from Region 6.

Region 7 – Alaska, continued...

A Type 2 and three Type 3 IMTs were assigned to fires burning on Southern Area Refuges. Due to staff vacancies, several FWS detailers from R3 and R6 helped the Southern Area Zone throughout the spring and summer with training, readiness, fuels planning, and the management of numerous fires. Two detailers from R6 and one from R3 also helped the Eastern Interior Refuges FMO manage numerous fires. Fire management staff found the use of detailers to be extremely useful as they could be deployed to villages close to the fires to serve as liaisons for the FMOs to the Protecting Agency and to help with the documentation of the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) for assigned fires.

The Alaska Wildfire Coordinating Group (AWFCG) stood up the Multi Agency Coordinating Group (MAC) in Fairbanks at Planning Level (PL4) which then transitioned to PL5 for over 30 days.



Tundra Fire on Yukon Delta NWR. Credit: M. Snyder, AK Division of Forestry

FWS once again provided support to Alaska fire protection agencies with various resources and many traveled to the lower 48 for assignments once the fire season in Alaska slowed. All fire management staff in Alaska were assigned to incidents, Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) support, or MAC support at least once during the season.

Several projects were completed by Kenai NWR and regional fire management staff under the Funny River Fire Burned Area Emergency Response and Assessment: assessment of cultural sites; burn severity assessment and mapping; and invasive species management.

Fuels Management: The fuels management program in Alaska succeeded in maintaining the natural fire regime on almost 2 million acres through managed wildfires. The impacts from a busy fire season resulted in most planned treatments being pushed into fiscal year 16. One of these was disrupted by the Card Street fire that interacted with 2 current prescribed fire units and also crushed units from the 1980's that acted as fuel type changes and operational control points. Not all treatments were delayed; a hazardous fuels thinning project continued on a unit adjacent to the Tetlin NWR headquarters. In order to have continued success in critical Wildland Urban Interface, the region issued a cooperative agreement between the State of Alaska, Division of Forestry and the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge for completion in FY16. The region continues to use the Interagency Fuels Treatment Decision Support System (IFTDSS) in planning efforts for these treatments.

Region 7 – Alaska, continued...

The Regional Fire Ecologist helped design and test field methods for a Joint Fire Science Program project examining fuels treatment duration and cost effectiveness in the Alaska boreal region.

Training: Fire personnel supported interagency partners in providing Canadian Fire Danger Rating System (CFFDRS) training as well as pack testing and refreshers for AFS and Refuge staff. 25 red cards were issued to FWS staff in Region 7. Fire staff from the Southern Area Refuges conducted two S-212 classes and the FMO trained as lead instructor for M-581. Two Alaska fire staff completed S-495. Four Refuge Manager and Deputies attended National Fire Management Leadership training at NAFRI. The AFMO for Eastern Interior Refuges attended Critical Incident Stress Management, Learning from Unintended Outcomes. Several fire staff took part in staff rides offered through the Branch of Fire Management. The Battle of Shiloh, Dude Fire, and The Battle of Gettysburg staff rides provided for powerful opportunities to learn and gain insight from these historic and tragic events. The FWS Fire Planner and the Fire Planner for the State Division of Forestry presented a webinar titled “Alaska WFDSS Refresher for FMOs and Agency Administrators” prior to fire season. The Regional Fire Ecologist co-presented a webinar “WFDSS Fire Behavior Modeling Alaska: Ready for the Season?”

Planning: At least one WFDSS decision was published for 35 of the 97 fires affecting Refuge lands in Alaska this season. The large number of fires, and the frequent instances where multiple fires merged, highlighted issues with WFDSS that will be addressed in an interagency effort over the coming year. Region 7 FWS and 5 other participating Federal and State agencies revised the Alaska Master Cooperative Wildland Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreement and associated Annual Operating Plan initiated in 2010. The revised Kodiak NWR Fire Management Plan is under review and will be approved by the end of this calendar year. The Known Sites Database was updated for Kenai and Kodiak NWRs. The Kenai NWR Prevention Plan was completed.

Fire Ecology: The Regional Fire Ecologist continued a post-fire monitoring project in a 10-year-old burn on Kanuti NWR. Refuge biologists conducted bird surveys associated with the project and helped with vegetation monitoring. The Fire Ecologist also was a collaborator/cooperator on several proposals examining different aspects of fire ecology; one was funded as part of the NASA Arctic Boreal Vulnerability Experiment campaign.

Communications/Outreach: *Southern Area Refuges* - In spring, the Kenai NWR Manager and the FMO were presenters for a Funny River Fire staff ride. Prior to the fire season, the FMO and Kenai NWR Refuge Biologists designed and conducted a fire effects field lab for a Kenai Peninsula College biology class. The FMO also offered a wildland fire presentation at the college Career Day and led a Funny River Fire field trip for the Community Forest Council and a University of Alaska Fairbanks Natural Resource Management class. In mid-summer, the FMO and a fire prevention detailer met with the visiting Chinese delegation to share ideas on fire management and look at pre- and post-fire effects associated with the Funny River Fire. In mid-August, the AFMO and the Prescribed Fire Technician staffed a table at the Sterling Community Center for an “After the Fire” public outreach. Fire program staff authored 3 Refuge Notebook articles in the local Kenai Clarion newspaper. Links these can be found at:

Region 7 – Alaska, continued...

<http://peninsulaclarion.com/outdoors/2015-01-15/refuge-notebook-fire-management-officer-heads-off-to-new-adventures>

<http://peninsulaclarion.com/outdoors/2015-08-27/refuge-notebook-after-the-fire>,
<http://peninsulaclarion.com/outdoors/2015-07-30/refuge-notebook-the-kenai-peninsula-rediscovered>.

Fire Ecology - During the Alaska Fire Science Workshop at the beginning of FY15, the Regional Fire Ecologist did a presentation about effectiveness of fuel treatments during the 2014 Funny River Fire on Kenai NWR; the slides can be found at <https://www.frames.gov/partner-sites/afsc/events/previous-events/workshops/2014-fall-workshop/>. She also conducted a webinar titled “Adventures with IFTDSS on the Kenai Peninsula, Alaska” for the Alaska Fire Science Consortium; the recording is available at <https://www.frames.gov/partner-sites/afsc/events/previous-events/previous-webinars/iftcss-kenai/>. Two FWS Field Notes articles were prepared about current fire ecology studies, one about burn severity work in the Funny River Fire and one about post-fire monitoring on Kanuti NWR. They can be found at <http://www.fws.gov/fieldnotes/regmap.cfm?arskey=36356&callingKey=state&callingValue=AK> and <http://www.fws.gov/fieldnotes/regmap.cfm?arskey=36331&callingKey=state&callingValue=AK>, respectively. A poster about the Kanuti project was also developed for display at the Refuge’s community visit in the village of Allakaket.

Interagency Cooperation: FMOs, Regional Office fire staff, and several Refuge Managers attended the Interagency Fall Fire Review/Alaska Fire Science Consortium workshop and the annual spring Interagency Incident Management Team Meeting and Fire Management Officer Meeting. Regional and Refuge fire staff continue to participate in several Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group committees, providing representation on the Operations, Training, Fire Weather, Smoke Management, GIS, Fire Research Development and Application, Fire Modeling and Analysis, and Safety committees. The Regional Fire Ecologist led an inter-agency, interdisciplinary team tasked with revising the 2008 Fuel Model Guide to Alaska Vegetation, is a steering committee member for the Alaska Fire Science Consortium, and is on the FWS advisory committee for the Northwest Boreal Landscape Conservation Cooperative. The Southern Area Refuges FMO represented the Refuge on the Interagency All Lands All Hands Committee, the Kenai Peninsula Fire Chiefs Association, and the Kenai Peninsula Borough’s Local Emergency Planning Committee. The Regional Fire Management Coordinator and the Fire Planner serve as geographic editors for the GACC. Several FWS fire management staff participated in the CFFDRS summit in fall 2014, and the Southern Refuges FMO assisted with workshop planning. The workshop was attended by fire managers and researchers from Alaska, the Lake States, and Canada. Staff participated in the following national committees: Operations, Coordinating Group Advisory Council, Successional Planning, FWS Unmanned Aviation Vehicle representative for wildland fire, the FWS Fire Ecologist Team, the FWS Fuels Team, and the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee Wildfire Team

All Hazard/Support to Non-wildfire Incidents: There were no all-hazard events to report.

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REGION 8 - Pacific Southwest Region



General Overview: FY2015 was another year of change, challenge, and success for the Region 8 fire program. Our fire staff accomplished an amazing amount of work this year in spite of having reduced our workforce by almost 50% in the past few years. And most importantly, we had an excellent safety record representing only a small number of minor injuries.

Over the last four years, the Pacific Southwest Region has been in a persistent drought, amplifying year by year. The current conditions across California and Western Nevada have been defined as an exceptional drought, the highest of the drought ratings. During the winter of 2014, California and Nevada received roughly half of the average rainfall, but more significantly, received very little to no snowpack in the high elevations. The water allocation to the Refuges from rivers and water systems throughout the region varied from 0% to 60%; therefore, many wetland

areas with traditionally standing water were bone dry. This has affected the refuges throughout the entire state of California, the Klamath Basin, and western Nevada in these ways: by reducing the amount of water that is available to traditionally wet areas, significant drought mortality in live trees and the brush throughout California and the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and lack of winter moisture has affected soil-moisture levels and therefore driving all dead and down fuels to critically low levels. In the grass and former wetland areas, the thatch and dead fuels are so dry that all consumable vegetation is burning when subjected to a fire, creating control problems. Extreme burning conditions persisted in California, the Klamath Basin, and western Nevada throughout the season. However, summer moisture moderated the burning conditions to most parts of eastern and northern Nevada starting in mid-June and lasting through August.



Nevada Zone Engine Crew, Summer 2015. Credit: USFWS

Region 8 – Pacific Southwest, continued...

Personnel: The Region continues to implement our 2013 R8 fire management workforce plan, thus realigning workforce to our highest priority zones. The Regional Fire Management Coordinator position was vacated in November of 2014 and was held vacant throughout the fiscal year due to the uncertainty of the fire budget in out-years; this position is expected to be filled in FY16. In the interim, many duties have been assigned to the regional fire staff and field staff in order to get critical items complete. Regarding personnel changes in the field, the Klamath Zone had three fire positions vacated this year; the Assistant Fire Management Officer, Fire Budget Technician, and Fuels Technician. These positions have been identified in the workforce plan to not be filled in the future. However, the Zone did hire two Engine Captain's; meeting a need for critical mid-level leadership. Additionally, the Nevada Zone hired one Fire Operations Specialist, one Engine Captain, and two temporary firefighters. In our Southern California zone, we were able to hire a much needed lead firefighter position (GS-5) to fully staff both Engines. Finally, due to vacant fire positions, funding was redirected to hire more seasonals and allowed for an earlier start dates and more flexibility in training and preparedness activities.



Southern California Fire Zone Engine 58 on Rough Fire Credit: USFWS.

Wildland Fire Management:

The region had a relatively slow year for wildfires. Across the region, we had 29 wildfires for 19 acres in the fiscal year. Effective initial attack prevented most starts from growing into large wildfires. Also, we had several strategically placed fuels treatments preventing rapid spread of fire starts in the Central Valley.

Despite few starts on Refuge lands, statewide and national fire activity resulted in all zones and regional fire staff supporting a very busy fire season. Fire personnel supported interagency wildfire suppression needs throughout the western United States and Alaska, which kept the majority of fire qualified personnel on overhead or engine assignments. Ten regional personnel were committed to interagency incident management teams on pre-identified rosters. The region supported several non-traditional assignments such as a Canada division supervisor and an all-hazard faller assignment to Guam NWR, as assisted with several flash flood incidents on Desert NWR and in the San Diego area.



West Marsh Prescribed fire on Stillwater NWR, September 2015. Credit: Tim Rash/USFWS

Region 8 – Pacific Southwest, continued...

Fuels Management: In general, our burning occurs in upland fuels adjacent to wetland habitats. However we do have other habitats such as riparian woodland projects along the Sacramento River, timber on our Bear Valley Refuge, and farmed lands at the Lower Klamath and Tule Lake refuges. In most areas of the Region, the drought conditions have affected burn windows and capability to burn in the shoulder seasons this fiscal year, however, the region was able to meet our fuels management target of 6,887 acres on 74 projects. This accomplishment is comprised of 5,420 acres of prescribed fire, 4 acres of chemical treatments, 630 acres of mechanical treatments, and 700 acres of grazing fuels reduction treatments. In most zones, the prescribed fires are only able to be successful with the help of collateral duty firefighters and cooperator resources. Mechanical fuel reduction projects this year included the completion of over 24 miles of fuel break disc lines on San Diego and Hopper Mountain NWRs. These fuel breaks are extremely important for both keeping fire out of the critical flycatcher and condor habitats on the refuges. The Region completed 12,000 acres of non-WUI projects and 4,920 acres of WUI projects.



Prescribed Fire on the San Luis Complex. Credit: Peter Kelly/USFWS

The Region completed a lessons learned review for the Tract 17 Wildfire Declaration, which led to several additional policies in the RX fire planning and implementation for this region. The FMO and fire staff made several presentations on the lessons learned from this incident at the R1 prescribed burn workshop and within Region 8 to help educate and share valuable information.



Southern California Fire Crew with Secretary Jewell, September 2015. Credit: Lee Rickard.

Our Southern Central Valley Zone had several successes suppressing wildfires which burned into already established strategic disc line fuel breaks and prescribed fires. In June, San Luis NWR's fire crew has responded to three wildfires – in one day – on the West Bear Creek Unit of the San Luis NWR. All three fires originated along that interface between highway and habitat. In total, those fires could have potentially destroyed 10,000 acres or more of prime wildlife habitat, however the fire crews were able to suppress the fires small due to the lack of fuels along the highway. The zone will continue to strategically place fuel treatments to protect habitat from wildfires as they plan out-year treatments. Read about these successes in FWS Field notes:

<http://www.fws.gov/fieldnotes/regmap.cfm?arskey=36240&callingKey=state&callingValue=CA>

Region 8 – Pacific Southwest, continued...

Training: The zones continue to provide a variety of in-house trainings to our Refuge personnel and other Service employees who need some basic and more advanced fire training. Our fire staff also helps with interagency training classes at local levels and at many interagency training centers throughout the states. These include instructors for 300 and 400-level courses such as fire program management, prescribed fire planning and implementation, Nevada Rookie School, Southwestern CA fire academy, staff ride team leaders, prescribed fire refresher workshops, and many others. The region provided multiple cadre members for the planning and implementation for the



Driving practice at the CA DOI Engine Academy, April 2015. Credit: Cindy Sandoval/USFWS

California DOI engine academy, held in March and April this year at the Ione CalFire training facility. This academy is an intense 80-hour course designed to expose the student to all aspects of wildland engine operations with an emphasis on practical application and testing. The purpose of the academy is to provide relevant and innovative training to the wildland fire engine operator that emergency responders face today; to refine their driving skills in a variety of environments, become more proficient in pumping operations on heavy engines, and maintain fire apparatus to Agency standards. The following field notes story has additional information on the Academy: <http://www.fws.gov/FieldNotes/regmap.cfm?arskey=35962&callingKey=region&callingValue=8>.

In addition, Region 8 is an active member of the Great Basin and California Interagency Training Committees. While on these committees, our staff put in a lot of work toward interagency training workshops, course allocations and prioritizations, fire and incident management team succession planning, new courses, FEMA transitions, and many other facets of training on a geographic area level.



FWS Region 8 led or took part in numerous employee development opportunities this year, ranging from details to staff rides. Among the staff rides attended by R-8 personnel this year were South Canyon Fire, Battle of Gettysburg, and the Battle of Shiloh.

(left): Southern CA Fire Crew on the Rough Fire,
Credit: USFWS

Communications/Outreach: The fire zones to a great job with their limited staff to outreach to the public about fire safety, prevention, and firewise communities. Prevention and outreach events across the region include: Wildland Fire Foundation 5K and Half-Marathon at Red Rock Canyon NCA; Smokey Campfire Safety at Carolyn S. Reedom Elementary School in Las Vegas (an all-school event); Coronado open house and prevention event, Coronado, CA; Jamul community parade and Fourth of July parade; Snow Goose festival in Willows, CA; All zones participated in local interagency prevention and press release efforts throughout the year; and



Southern California Fire Zone E-58 Fire Crew on the Rouah Fire, September 2015. Credit: USFWS

many other events and coordination that could not specifically be mentioned.

Internal and external outreach efforts in the Klamath Basin and Nevada concentrated on promoting the protection of critical sage grouse habitat with our internal staff and cooperators. Numerous pre-season coordination meetings were held with interagency partners, dispatch centers, and refuge personnel to educate partners on the SO3336 document and plan. Most sage grouse outreach efforts concentrated with our USFS partners who dispatch and respond with resources to our critical habitat area in the region.

Planning: Planning efforts in this region include several fire management plans being completed and one plan responding to the Secretarial Order 3336, identifying the fire prevention and preparedness needs to the Clear Lake NWR. The Clear Lake plan was completed in June and was the result of a team of people studying fire danger and fuel conditions on and around the refuge. The plan outlines critical thresholds and a plan for responding to those thresholds during the fire season. After the plan was completed, the refuge did have a 7.5 acre fire within the priority habitat area in July, where response was coordinated according to the new plan. This showed a great success in getting a significant amount of coordination done in a short amount of time. Several units did complete updated fire management plans which include San Luis Complex and San Francisco Complexes. Sacramento and San Diego Complex fire management plan drafts are nearly complete and we expect signature in early FY16.



South Central Valley Fire Crew: Morning briefing on South Fork Complex, Credit: Pam Bierce/USFWS

Region 8 – Pacific Southwest, continued...

The fire program continues to be active in development of the comprehensive conservation plans; involvement that is critical in areas and habitats that are fire dependent. Region 8 was also successful in accomplishing the asset mapping project, thus identifying spatially the assets which are at risk to wildfire; this effort also took a regional team of GIS specialists and field personnel for verification and input of accurate locations. The region has been active in facilitating resilient landscape and grant proposals for monarch butterflies and sage grouse habitat improvement projects. And across California, Nevada and the Klamath basin, on a local and on statewide level, agreements and annual operating plans continue to be coordinated on and developed with our interagency partners. These agreements are critical to the FWS success both where we have fire resources and especially where we do not have them. Our fire zones are large and usually encompass several response areas that need annual coordination and agreements.

2015 Annual Fire Meeting Attendees (below)

(back row, left to right): Bob Parris, Dale Shippelhouse, Dave Goheen, Marc Olson, Ross Wise, Richard Hadley, Tim Rash. Front row left to right: Shawn Murphy, James Roberts, Lee Rickard, Tracey Germino, Dan Frisk, Nancy Hoffman, Christy Smith, Kim Van Hemelryck, Jessica Wade



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